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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving word analysis skills in order to increase sight reading, reading accuracy, and fluency. The targeted population consisted of second and third graders in a suburban area close to a large metropolitan city in a Midwestern state. The problems of low word analysis skills were documented through Qualitative Reading Inventory-II running records, and teacher surveys. The following are some of the probable causes for low word analysis skills. First, there is a lack of consistency in phonics instruction in the primary grades. Next, some students come from low economic backgrounds. Also, many students have another language as their first language. Finally, some students may not receive early interventions to prevent problems with reading skills. After reviewing the solution strategies and analyzing the problem setting, it was determined to implement the block "Working with Words" from the "Four Blocks of Literacy" program. "Working with Words" includes lessons that are multisensory and multilevel. Multisensory teaching is when students learn in an auditory, visual, kinesthetically, and tactile way. Multilevel means that the lessons reach the different levels of the students in the classroom. It will be taught to second and third grade students daily during reading instruction. Post intervention data indicated an improvement in students' independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels. The students performed at a higher level on the posttests of high frequency words and leveled texts. Contains 55 references and 10 tables of data. Appendixes contain the teacher survey instrument, parent consent letters, high frequency words, and lists of "Making Words" lessons. (Author/RS)

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IMPROVING STUDENTS' WORD ANALYSIS SKILLS BY IMPLEMENTING "WORKING WITH WORDS" FROM THE FOUR BLOCKS OF LITERACY PROGRAM

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Amanda Zizak

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

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DEDICATION

This Action Research project is dedicated to the faculty members and administrators who guided us through this endeavor.
We would also like to dedicate this research project to Joe, Jamie, our families, and friends who supported us throughout this rewarding experience.

Amanda Zizak and Kelly Velasco

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving word analysis skills in order to increase sight reading, reading accuracy, and fluency. The targeted population consisted of second and third graders in a suburban area close to a large metropolitan city in a Midwestern state. The problems of low word analysis skills were documented through Qualitative Reading Inventory-II word lists, Qualitative Reading Inventory-II running records, and teacher surveys.

The following are some of the probable causes for low word analysis skills. First, there is a lack of consistency in phonics instruction in the primary grades. Next, some students come from low economic backgrounds. Also, many students have another language as their first language. Finally, some students may not receive early interventions to prevent problems with reading skills.

After reviewing the solution strategies and analyzing the problem setting, it was determined to implement the block "Working with Words" from the Four Blocks of Literacy program. "Working with Words" includes lessons that are multsensory and multilevel. Multisensory teaching is when students learn in an auditory, visual, kinesthetically, and tactile way. Multilevel means that the lessons reach the different levels of the students in the classroom. It will be taught to second and third grade students daily during reading instruction.

Post intervention data indicated an improvement in students' independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels. The students performed at a higher level on the posttests of high frequency words and leveled texts.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted second and third grade classes exhibit low reading abilities that interfere with academic growth. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes reading inventory, word lists, and teacher surveys.

Immediate Problem Context

School A is located in a suburban area close to a large metropolitan city in a mid-western state. The school consists of grades pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. The student population is 768 students. The students are bussed to school, walk, or are driven to school by family. The ethnic background of the students is as follows: 42.8% are white, 22.0% are black, 18.0% are asian/pacific islander, 16.7% are hispanic, and 0.5% are native american. The percentage of low-income students, which includes families receiving public aid, may be living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, may be supported in foster homes with public funds, or may be eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches, is 11.8%. The percentage of students with limited-english-proficiency, which include students whose first language is not English and who are eligible for transitional bilingual education, is 4.4%. The attendance rate is reported as 94.5%. The student mobility rate, which includes the number of students

who enroll in or leave a school during the school year, is 25.3%. No chronic truancy was reported, which are students who were absent from school without valid cause for 18 or more of the last 180 days. In kindergarten, the average class size is 18.4 students. In first grade, the average class size is 21.4 students. In second grade, the average class size is 23 students. In third grade, the average class size is 24.7 students. In fourth grade, the average class size is 26 students. In fifth grade, the average class size is 20.5 students. In sixth grade, the average class size is 28.3 students.

The staff is made up of 71 employees of whom 37 are classroom teachers. There are 15 classroom assistants, three speech therapists, three custodians, two social workers, two secretaries, two psychologists, one principal, one assistant-principal, one nurse, one gifted education resource teacher, one instructional coordinator, one technology facilitator, and one library media center teacher. The average number of years of teaching experience is 14 years. The percentage of teachers with bachelor's degrees is 50.3%. The percentage of teachers with master's degree and above is 49.7%. The pupil-teacher ratio is 19.5 to one. The pupil-certified staff ratio is 14.5 to one. The pupil-administrator ratio is 239.3 to one. The school's average teacher salary is $44,797, and the average administrator salary is $79,608. The per pupil expenditure is $6,269.

The following are the special programs that exist at the school: a district supported D.A.R.E. program, a bilingual program, an early childhood program, a Title I program, a reading improvement program, an extended day (for students who need extra support in reading) program, and a gifted program.

The activities that are available for the students are: Rainbows (support for children who have suffered a loss), Peer Mediation (a student group to help others solve problems), Students Against a Fearful Environment Team (a group of students and staff who work towards making the school a safe place), The Chess Club (a group of students who have interest in playing chess), American Book Club (a book club for students interested in reading American Girls books), Geography Bee (students competing using their knowledge of geography), and The Talent Show (an arena for students to showcase their talents).

The school believes in looking at each student on a case by case basis to determine if the child will be promoted or retained. Different scales and checklists are used in order to make the decision. The students who have an Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.) are serviced through resource teachers in the building. Those needing a self-contained room are placed at another school.

The school's reading program is Houghton Mifflin's Invitations to Literacy program. (Invitations to Literacy, 1996) The math program is MathLand by Creative Publications, a hands-on centered program. (Charles, 1998) The science program is a nationally recognized hands-on science program which draws observers from the state, national and international levels. Teachers in the district created this curriculum. The social studies program is Nystrom's Exploring Where & Why. (Exploring Where & Why, 1998) There is an average of two computers with Internet access per classroom and a computer lab.

The school has three main goals. In the area of discipline, the goal is to develop a K-6 plan to address social skills and behavioral expectations enabling students to

learn to monitor themselves and exhibit appropriate behavior in a variety of situations and settings in a school environment. In the area of mathematics, the goal is to increase the percentage of students scoring above the 50th national percentile. Lastly, in reading, the goal is to increase the percentage of students scoring above the 50th national percentile.

School B is located in a suburban area close to a large metropolitan city in a mid-western state. The school consists of grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The student population is 740 students. The students are bussed to school, walk, or are driven to school. The ethnic background of the students is as follows: 86.5% are white, 9.9% are asian/pacific islander, 2.6% are black, and 1.1% are hispanic. The percentage of low-income students is 0.5%. The percentage of students with limited-english proficiency is 2.4%. The attendance rate is reported as 96.2%. The student mobility rate is 8.4%. No chronic truancy was reported. In kindergarten, the average class size is 23 students. In first grade, the average class size is 26.4 students. In second grade, the average class size is 24.7 students. In third grade, the average class size is 24.4 students. In fourth grade, the average class size is 26.2 students. In fifth grade, the average class size is 25.7 students.

The staff is made up of 68 employees of whom 23 are classroom teachers. There are 12 teacher assistants, four custodians, two speech therapists, two reading improvement teachers, two building facilitators, one principal, one secretary, one nurse, one health/clerical aide, one substitute teacher aide, one physical education teacher, one adaptive physical education teacher, one art teacher, one music teacher, one band teacher, one orchestra teacher, one occupational therapist, one physical therapist, one

LMC director, one LMC aide, one computer lab aide, one learning resource teacher, one student support services teacher, one Project Arrow teacher, one psychologist, one social worker, one directed teaching class teacher, and one ESL teacher. The average number of years of teaching experience is 15.1 years. The percentage of teachers with bachelor's degrees is 51.8%. The percentage of teachers with Master's degrees and above is 47.8%. The pupil-teacher ratio is 20.9 to one. The pupil-certified staff ratio is 14.9 to one. The pupil-administrator ratio is 286.3 to one. The school's average teacher salary is $45,748, and the average administrator salary is $76,274. The per pupil expenditure is $6,621.

The following are the special programs that exist at the school: a third grade swim program, a fifth grade D.A.R.E. program, a substance abuse program, a reading improvement program, English as a second language, adaptive physical education, occupational and physical therapy, and Project Arrow which is a gifted and talented program.

The activities that are available for the students are: Young Authors Program (an opportunity for students to create their own story and publish it), a fourth and fifth grade chorus (students who have an interest in music), a fifth grade band and orchestra (students who have an interest in musical instruments), educational field trips (trips to enhance topics of study), assembly programs sponsored by the P.T.A. (outside groups presenting to students), a writing and publishing company sponsored by the P.T.A. (students submitting writing to be published), art awareness sponsored by the P.T.A. (parents introducing students to famous artists), Project SHARE sponsored by the P.T.A. (a program with the goal of having students involved in helping different

organizations in the community and the area), and after school enrichment classes which are sponsored by the P.T.A. (various classes are offered on a variety of topics).

The school is considered a no retention building. The students who have an I.E.P. are serviced through resource teachers in the building. The special needs students in the building are in an inclusion program. Those needing a self-contained room are placed in the directed teaching program that is available at the school.

The school's reading program is MacMillan/McGraw–Hill's Window to the Sky. (MacMillan/McGraw-Hill-Window to the Sky, 1993) The math program is Addison-Wesley Mathematics. (Addison-Wesley Mathematics, 1991) The science program is a hands on program designed by a committee of teachers from the district, led by a coordinator. The social studies program is MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's People Together. (People Together, 1997) The spelling program is McCracken's-Spelling Through Phonics. (McCracken, 1996) There is a computer lab curriculum. There is an average of one computer with Internet access per primary classroom, two computers with Internet access per intermediate classroom, and a computer lab.

The school has two main goals. In the area of reading achievement, the goal is to improve student achievement in reading by facilitating students' understanding and use of vocabulary skills. In the area of learning climate and citizenship, the goal is for students to demonstrate through their performance and behavior at school, increased responsibility for their own action in relation to themselves, to other people and property.

The Surrounding Community

The district of school A covers 31 square miles and the students come from seven different communities, which are governed by different municipal governments.

The school district is made up of 27 schools. Five are junior high schools which serve grades seven and eight. The other 22 are elementary schools, which serve kindergarten through sixth grade. There are six sites that serve early childhood programs, which are located in some of the elementary schools. There are 16,066 students in the district. The district provides bus service to students. Free bus service is provided for those who live one or more square miles from the school. The district offers special education and gifted programs to students. The district serves students from five different ethnic backgrounds. In the district 70.3% of the students are white, 14.2% are asian/pacific Islander, 8.3% are hispanic, 7.2% are black, and 0.1% are native american. Low-income students make up 4.7% of the district's population, and 4.9% of the population are limited-english proficient. The district's attendance rate is 95.6%, the mobility rate is 11.2%, and there is a low percentage of chronic truancy reported, since there are only five students considered chronic truants. In kindergarten, the average class size is 19.0 students. In first grade, the average class size is 20.8 students. In second grade, the average class size is 23.6 students. In third grade, the average class size is 23.1 students. In fourth grade, the average class size is 23.4 students. In fifth grade, the average class size is 24.6 students. In sixth grade, the average class size is 23.9 students.

The ethnic diversity in the district is limited in that 97.5% of the school personnel is white, 0.9% are asian/pacific islander, 0.8% are black, 0.8% are hispanic, 0.1% are native american. The teaching staff in the district is made up of 985 people of whom females make up 86.9%, and males make up 13.1%. The average teaching experience in the district is 18.2 years. The percentage of teachers with bachelor's degree is

41.3%, and the percentage of teachers with a master's degree is 58.7%. The pupil to teacher ratio is 19.4 to one. The pupil to certified staff (assistants) ratio is 14.3 to one. The pupil to administrator ratio is 257.1 to one. The average teacher salary is $56,352 and the average administrator salary is $92,476. A superintendent heads the district level administration. There is an associate superintendent for personnel services. There are four assistant superintendents whose responsibilities are staff operation services, instructional support services, special services, and business services. The per pupil expenditure is $7,514.

In addition, there are other areas of support in the district. The district has a bilingual program, which serves students from 26 different languages. The district has a nature center and observatory. The district believes in and follows the philosophy of social promotion. There is the assistance and support of over 1,200 PTA volunteers throughout the district. The district has a bond rating of A+.

The community of school A is located in a suburb of a large metropolitan city in a mid-western state. The community covers 19.9 square miles. The population of the city is 48,132. The daytime population of the community is 64,132. The resident labor force is 29,807. An estimated 16,000 workers are attracted to the community daily. The population has grown by 120% since the village's inception in 1959. The median age in the community is 30 years old. In the community 86% of the people are white, 8% are asian/pacific islander, 3% are black, 2% are of other ethnic backgrounds, and 1% are native american. In the community 31% of the people are younger adults, 31% are school age, 21% are older adults, 11% are infants/preschool, and 6% are seniors. The education distribution is as follows: 7% have a graduate degree, 23% have a bachelor's

degree, 8% have an associates degree, 27% of the people have some college with no degree, 24% are high school graduates, and 11% have no high school diploma. The per capita income is $24,160, and the median household income is $70,301. There are 17,532 households in the community. There are 2.75 persons per household. Housing in the community ranges from $34,000 to $385,000. There is government subsidized housing in the community. The average value for single-family detached homes is $147,782. The average value for owner-occupied attached dwellings is $100,117. Single family detached housing is occupied by 56% of the community. Single family attached housing is occupied by 17% of the community. Multi-family housing is occupied by 27% of the community. The rental prices per month are $550-$1800. The community offers six school districts, a state university's education center, various houses of worship, a police and fire department, a hospital, a park district, a postal service, a branch library, and forest preserves. There are two community colleges within ten miles of the community. There are four airports near the community. One major interstate and four state routes allow residents to commute to work.

The district of school B is located in two counties and the students come from three communities, which are governed by different municipal governments. The school district is a unit school district made up of 27 schools. Nineteen are elementary schools, which serve grades kindergarten through fifth grade, five are middle schools, which serve grades sixth through eighth, there are two high schools, and one preschool. There are 19,145 students in the district. The district provides bus service to students. Free bus service is provided for students who live one and a half miles from school or live less than one and a half miles from school but must be transported due to a serious

safety hazard that has been approved by the state department of transportation. The district offers special education and gifted programs to students. The district serves students from five different ethnic backgrounds. In the district 82.5% of the students are white, 7.1% are asian/pacific islander, 6.5% are black, 3.7% are hispanic, and 0.2% are native american. Low-income students make up 1.0% of the district's population, and 2.4% of the population are limited-english proficient. The district's attendance rate is 95.6%, the mobility rate is 12.3%, there is a low percentage which is 0.2% of chronic truancy reported, and there are 38 chronic truants. In kindergarten, the average class size is 23 students. In first grade, the average class size is 24.8 students. In second grade, the average class size is 26.1 students. In third grade, the average class size is 26.3 students. In fourth grade, the average class size is 26.1 students. In fifth grade, the average class size is 24.9 students.

The ethnic diversity in the district of classroom teachers is limited in that 96.8% are white, 1.7% are black, 1.0% are asian/pacific islander, and 0.5% are hispanic. The teaching staff in the district is made up of 1,180 people of whom females make up 79.9%, and males make up 20.1%. The average teaching experience in the district is 8.6 years. The percentage of teachers with a bachelor's degree is 58.9%, and the percentage with master's and above is 41.1%. The pupil to teacher ratio is 19. to one. The pupil to certified staff (assistants) ratio is 14.8 to one. The pupil to administrator ratio is 400.9 to one. The average teacher salary is $38,237 and the average administrator salary is $85,515. A superintendent heads the district level administration. There is an associate superintendent for secondary education. There are five assistant superintendents whose responsibilities are elementary education, business services,

human resources, curriculum and instruction services, and student services. The per pupil expenditure is $6,062.

In addition there are other areas of support in the district. The district has an English as a Second Language program, which serves students from 29 different languages. The district has an observatory, two greenhouses, and two Olympic-sized swimming pools. The district believes in and follows the philosophy of social promotion. There is the assistance and support of a parent's council, which is affiliated with the state and national PTA.

The community of school B is located in a suburb of a large metropolitan city in a mid-western state. The community covers 34.45 square miles. The population of the city is 125,000. The population is 13 times larger than it was in 1960. The resident labor force is 62,531. There are 50,899 jobs available in the community. The median age in the community is 30.9 years old. In the community 88.5% of the people are white, 5.8% are asian, 2.2% are black, 2.2% are hispanic, and 1.3% are american indian/other. In the community 38% of the people are 35-64 years old, 23.5% are 19-34 years old, 22.8% are 5-18 years old, 10.2% are under five years old, and 5.5% are over the age of 65. The per capita income is $23,934. There are 43,500 households in the community. The community is made up of over 200 neighborhoods. Condominiums and town homes can range in price from $50,000 to $380,000. The average owner-occupied housing value is $279,661. Construction of new homes is available and they are available anywhere from $140,000 to $1,000,000 or more. The average contract rent is $680. The community offers two school districts, one college, four college extension facilities, over 70 houses of worship, a community career center, a police and

fire department, a hospital, a park district, a postal system, a library, a YMCA, a variety of museums, arboretums, forest preserves, historic sites, a riverwalk, and recreation areas. There are three other college institutions within commuting distance of the community. There are three airports near the community. There are four interstate highways, which allow residents to commute to work.

National Context of the Problem

Teachers in America have the responsibility of teaching the nation's children how to read. "The importance of teaching children to read cannot be understated." (Special Education Reading Task Force, California Department of Education, & California State Board of Education, 1999, p. v) It is prevalent today that many children cannot read at their academic level. "Research has shown that for many children, learning to read is a struggle. Although the numbers are debated, it is well established that 30 to 40 percent of children will have significant difficulty learning to read." (Special Education Reading Task Force, California Department of Education, & California State Board of Education, 1999, p. v) "In today's society, the failure to read proficiently has profound educational and life consequences- it is the most likely reason that children drop out of school, are retained, or are referred to special education." (Special Education Reading Task Force, California Department of Education, & California State Board of Education, 1999, p. v) Students who lack reading skills are limited in their options for postsecondary school and work. (Special Education Reading Task Force, California Department of Education, & California State Board of Education, 1999, p. v) In his State of American Education Speech, Richard W. Riley, who is the Secretary of Education, said, "Reading scores are not where we want them to be." (Riley, 1998) Furthermore, Riley states about reading,

"...38% of our 4th graders are struggling to learn this very first basic." (Riley, 1999) There has been some debate about how to increase reading levels of children. Some researchers support the philosophy of phonics. "Phonological awareness is a better single predictor of reading success than more global measures like mental age, cognitive level, or language proficiency." (Montgomery, 2000, p. 1) Skills that students need to acquire to be successful as life-long readers are letter-name knowledge and phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is knowing the sounds in words that are spoken. (CIERA, 1998) Furthermore, "Phonological awareness is both a cause, and a consequence, of successful reading." (Montgomery, 2000, p.1) "Some studies are now showing that children with developmental phonological disorders are at risk for eventual reading difficulties." (Montgomery, 2000, p.1) It is predicted that students who have low decoding skills in the first and second grades will have low comprehension skills in the ninth grade. (Montgomery, 2000, p.1) Other researchers believe in the philosophy of whole language. "These theorists and researchers have shown that human competence in oral and written language grows as language is used for real purposes -- without formal drill, intensive corrective feedback, or direct instruction. Children learn as they engage as active agents constructing their own coherent views of the world and of the language human beings use to interact with the world and with each other. The development of writing and reading is fostered by meaningful social interaction, usually entailing oral language." (Wagner, 1989) Those who believe in the whole language philosophy think that reading instruction should take place in real-life situations. "One thing is for certain: No one in the reading field would say that there is only one way to do things, let alone one way to teach reading." (Flippo, 1999, p. 38) In

addition to these two teaching styles, researchers have developed a list of "10 Researched-Based Principles." They are as follows: home language and literacy experiences, preschool programs, letter-name knowledge and phonemic awareness, consistent, well-designed, and focused primary level instruction, transfer of learned instruction in primary level classrooms to everyday reading and writing, cultural and linguistic diversity, systematic instruction for children who have been identified as having reading disabilities, opportunities for students to read various types of literature, professional growth activities for teachers and administrators, and entire school involvement. (CIERA, 1998) Secretary Richard W. Riley states that a main goal for the United States is to "become a nation of readers." Some actions have been taken to achieve this goal. One is that 36 states have committed to making sure that every child is an independent reader by the end third grade or earlier. Furthermore, 915 colleges and universities encourage their work-study students to be a reading tutor and mentor. Also, a reading guide for parents was created by many literacy organizations such as The American Library Association and Girl Scouts. Riley also offered a parent guide called "Checkpoints for Progress" which gives examples of reading skills that children should possess at certain ages. It also included ideas for parents to use to help their children to become better readers. (Riley, 1998)

"Effective prevention and early intervention programs can increase the reading skills of 85 percent to 90 percent of poor readers to average readers." (Special Education Reading Task Force, California Department of Education, & California State Board of Education, 1999. p. 1) Students who enter first grade with phonological awareness are more successful readers than those who do not have the phonemic

background. (Fitzsimmons, 1998) Giving the students the opportunity to develop important language skills, like phonological awareness, can prevent students from failing in reading. (Special Education Reading Task Force, California Department of Education, & California State Board of Education, 1999) "Effective early intervention and prevention includes the direct teaching of critical literacy skills such as phonemic awareness, letter recognition, oral language, and vocabulary development. These skills should be taught as early as preschool." (Special Education Reading Task Force, California Department of Education, & California State Board of Education, 1999. p. 7) In conclusion, children's reading abilities are a concern throughout the nation.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of low reading abilities that interfere with academic growth, reading inventory running records, reading inventory word lists, and teacher surveys were used. (Appendix A) (Caldwell, 1995) Seven second graders and seven third graders were involved in this process over the six month time period. In September of 2000, the targeted students were given the reading inventory running record and reading inventory word list pretests to determine their reading ability. Also, a survey was given to the primary teachers at both schools to determine their philosophy of reading and their type of reading instruction.

Table 1 Qualitative Reading Inventory Levels-Running Record

Performance Level Text Level and Number of Words per Passage	Independent Level	Instructional Level	Frustration Level
Pre-Primer 64 words	0-1 miscues	2-3 miscues	4+ miscues
Primer 176 words	0-4 miscues	5-9 miscues	10+ miscues
One 181 words	0-4 miscues	5-9 miscues	10+ miscues
Two 175 words	0-4 miscues	5-9 miscues	10+ miscues
Three 217 words	0-5 miscues	6-11 miscues	12+ miscues
Four 308 words	0-7 miscues	8-16 miscues	17+ miscues
Five 297 words	0-7 miscues	8-16 miscues	17+ miscues

The reading inventory running record consists of the students reading leveled texts with the number of errors recorded. The stories' levels are Pre-primer, Primer, One, Two, Three, Four, and Five. Table 1 shows how many miscues a student can make while reading the different leveled texts. The number of mistakes made by the student determines which text levels the student is reading at independently, instructionally, and with frustration. At the Independent Level, the student can read the text or similar leveled texts by themselves. The Instructional Level is a level where a student can read with teacher assistance. This is the level of text a student should be reading at to improve his or her reading skills and fluency. The Frustration Level is text that is too difficult for a student to read on their own. The ultimate goal is that the student performs independently at his or her current grade level.

During each assessment, there were seven students from second grade and seven students from third grade that were given the pretests and the posttests.

Table 2 Second Grade Students' Results from Qualitative Reading Inventory II-Running Record

Performance Level / Text Level	Independent Level	Instructional Level	Frustration Level
Criteria Not Met	2	4	
Pre-Primer	3		2
Primer		2	
One		1	2
Two			1
Three	2		
Four			2
Five			

Table 2 shows the results of the second graders' reading inventory running record. Of the second graders, 28 percent were reading independently at the third grade level. The percentage of students reading independently at the pre-primer level

is 43 percent. The rest of the students were not reading independently at any of the levels.

Table 3 Third Grade Students' Results from Qualitative Reading Inventory-Running Record

Performance Level / Text Level	Independent Level	Instructional Level	Frustration Level
Criteria Not Met			
Pre-Primer			
Primer			
One			
Two	3		
Three	4	3	
Four		4	3
Five			4

Table 3 shows the results of the third graders' reading inventory running record. Of the third graders, 57 percent were reading independently at the third grade level. The percentage of students who were reading independently at the second grade level was 43 percent.

Table 4 Qualitative Reading Inventory-Word List Levels

Performance Level / Text Level	Independent Level	Instructional Level	Frustration Level
Pre-Primer	0-2 miscues	3-7 miscues	8-20 miscues
Primer	0-2 miscues	3-7 miscues	8-20 miscues
One	0-2 miscues	3-7 miscues	8-20 miscues
Two	0-2 miscues	3-7 miscues	8-20 miscues
Three	0-2 miscues	3-7 miscues	8-20 miscues
Four	0-2 miscues	3-7 miscues	8-20 miscues
Five	0-2 miscues	3-7 miscues	8-20 miscues

The reading inventory word list consists of the students reading leveled word lists with the number of errors recorded. Table 4 shows how many miscues the student can make while reading the different leveled word lists. The number of mistakes made by

the student determines which leveled word list the student is reading at independently, instructionally, and with frustration.

Table 5 Second Grade Students' Results of Qualitative Reading Inventory II-Word List

Performance Level / Text Level	Independent Level	Instructional Level	Frustration Level
Criteria Not Met	2	2	
Pre-Primer	1		
Primer	2	2	1
One	2	1	2
Two		2	2
Three			2
Four			
Five			

Table 5 shows the results of the second grader's reading inventory word list. There are no children who performed independently at the second grade level. The percentage of students who were reading at the second grade instructional level was 29 percent. The percentage of students who performed independently at the first grade level is 29 percent. The percentage of students who performed independently at the primer level is 29 percent. The percentage of students who performed independently at the pre-primer level is 14 percent. Furthermore, 29 percent of the students did not perform independently at any of the levels.

Table 6 Third Grade Students' Results of Qualitative Reading Inventory-Word List

Performance Level / Text Level	Independent Level	Instructional Level	Frustration Level
Criteria Not Met			
Pre-Primer			
Primer	2		
One	4	1	
Two	1	6	1
Three			6
Four			
Five			

The data in Table 6 shows the results of the third grader's reading inventory word list. There are no children who performed independently or instructionally at the third grade level. The percentage of students who performed independently at the second grade level is 14 percent. The percentage of the students who performed independently at the first grade level is 57 percent. The percent of the students performed independently at the primer level is 29 percent.

Both of these assessments show clearly that many of the students are reading below grade level. The students showed difficulty in reading from both a word list and a story passage.

Probable Causes

The causes for students' low reading abilities are many and varied. One possible reason why students have these low reading skills is because of a lack of consistency in phonics instruction in the primary grades.

This is evident through a survey that was given to the primary teachers at both sites. A total of 27 teachers completed the survey. When asked what their philosophy is of teaching reading, 20 teachers believe in using both phonics and whole language

practices in their everyday reading instruction. Seven teachers' philosophy was strictly whole language. The time spent on directly teaching phonics varied greatly. Ten teachers teach these skills one to two days a week. Eight teachers teach these skills everyday of the week. Six teachers teach these skills two to four days a week. Lastly, 3 teachers do not teach phonics in their classroom. The time allowed for students to read out loud also varied. Twelve teachers have their students read out loud three to four days a week, and another 12 teachers have their students read out loud five or more times a week. Three teachers have their students read out loud only one to two times a week. The last question asked how often the students work on reading fluency, which includes expression, pronunciation, following punctuation marks, and volume. Fifteen teachers work on these skills three to four times a week. Seven teachers work on fluency skills one to two times a week. Finally, five teachers said that they work on fluency skills five or more times a week. The results of the survey show that there is no consistency in reading instruction in the primary grades.

The literature suggests several causes for low reading abilities. First, a balance between phonics and whole language teaching practices is lacking in the school setting. For example, California's and other states' students had very low scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests. Citizens and politicians were upset that the state of California tied for last place. They wanted to put the blame on the whole language philosophy of teaching, and because of this, the so-called teaching method of phonics was adopted. This was done because the politicians assumed the students were lacking phonics skills, when in fact, the test didn't test phonics skills. Therefore, the state of California stopped focusing on reading for meaning and reading authentic

literature and the schools began to focus on skills and drills to teach phonics skills. (Flippo, 1999)

The above instance clearly shows how some people endorse one approach to teaching reading as the solution to low reading abilities. People tend to look for one simple solution to reading, which in reality is a complex skill. However, Flippo states, "One thing is certain: No one in the reading field would say that there is only one way to do things, let alone one way to teach reading." (1999) Today researchers know that there are many different methods to teach children how to read. Teachers should be flexible when they decide which methods and materials they should use for different students because students learn in different ways. Therefore, a balanced and multi-method approach to teaching reading should be in place. (Flippo, 1999)

At both Sites A and B, the majority of the teachers did believe in a balanced approach of teaching reading, however, the time spent teaching phonics varied greatly. There isn't a common opinion of how much time should be spent teaching phonics during reading instruction. Therefore, the students are receiving different types of reading instruction in different classrooms. This could be one of the causes for low reading abilities among the students.

Literature also shows that the problem of low reading abilities can be due to the fact that many students come from low economic backgrounds. Compared to the other Western nations, the United States has a higher occurrence of child poverty. Even though young children make up 25 percent of the United States population, young people represent 40 percent of the population classified as poor. The consequences for these children who are born poor are immense. Several sources indicate that children

who reside in the inner cities are more likely to encounter circumstances that are educationally damaging, such as exposure to drugs and AIDS, low weight at birth, lack of good nutrition, exposure to lead, and accidents and personal injuries. Furthermore, these children who live in the inner city, are seven times more likely to be a victim of neglect or child abuse. Any one or a combination of the above puts these children at a greater risk for having poor academic achievement. All of these factors can also lead to these children dropping out of school. There are as many as one million of these "at-risk" students who drop out of school every year. A recent study showed that there is a strong link between the income level of a family and the I.Q. of a child. The study included 900 children who had a low birth weight. The study concluded that those children who were living in constant poverty during their first five years of life, had I.Q.s which averaged 9.1 points lower than those children whose families were not living in poverty. Researchers strongly believe that poverty in children scars their academic development. (Renchler, 1993) For example, in Site A, 11.8% of the students are labeled as low-income students. Across the state, 36.1% of the students are considered low-income. These students may have low reading abilities due to their economic background.

Literature also suggests that children who have English as their second language may have low reading abilities. The number of linguistically and culturally diverse students in the public schools in the United Sates is growing. (Brice, 1999) "About 70 percent of all public school students are white, 16 percent are black, and 10 percent are Hispanic." (Latham, 1999, p. 84)

At Site A, 42.8% of the students are white, 22.0% are black, 18.0% are asian/pacific islander, 16.7% are hispanic, and 0.5% are native american. At Site B, 86.5% are white, 9.9% are asian/pacific islander, 2.6% are black, and 1.1% are hispanic. Across the state, 62.0% are white, 20.8% are black, 13.9% are hispanic, 3.2% are asian/pacific islander, and 0.2% are native american. This cultural diversity could be a cause of low reading abilities among the students.

Many students have been mainstreamed from bilingual classes into monolingual classes, and the bilingual students are frequently expected to perform the same activities and complete the same work as the rest of the class. A disadvantage for the bilingual students is they have difficulty understanding the everyday English language. Teachers also need to be aware of the child's cultural background may affect his or her ability to perform in the classroom. The student's language barrier causes the child to have difficulty with comprehension, following directions, and appropriately using phrases from the English language. When the teacher uses idioms in the English language, a barrier is formed between the teacher and student. This can consequently cause the students to test lower. These problems are also compounded because the bilingual students are also feeling frustration, anxiety, and in some cases, low self-esteem. Bilingual students can fall further behind, and sometimes behavior problems begin to arise because of this. (Wilson, 2000)

At Site A, the percentage of students with limited-english proficiency is 4.4%. At Site B, the percentage of students with limited-english proficiency is 2.4%. Across the state, the percentage of students with limited-english proficiency is 6.4%. These students may encounter problems with reading and may have low reading abilities.

Literature also shows that low reading abilities may be caused by a lack of early intervention. Instruction that is delayed encourages increased academic failure. Furthermore, those students who do not learn how to read by the third grade may encounter a life filled with reading difficulties. (Special Education Reading Task Force, California Department of Education, & California State Board of Education, 1999)

Students have different experiences with language and reading when they are young. Those students who lack these language experiences enter school behind students who had these language experiences. In first grade, there is already a year's difference in the levels of achievement among the children who are entering school. (Riley, 1998)

The majority of reading problems that today's adolescents and adults are facing could have been prevented and resolved in the early part of their childhood. (America Reads Challenge, 1998) Reading difficulties can be prevented during the time period of birth to the preschool years. Their environment should include sufficient health care, loving and warm parental care, and the encouragement of oral language skills and enthusiasm for reading. (NEA, 1999) Phonemic awareness is fostered during language activities done during these early years which leads to higher reading success. (Nicholson, 1994) Another method to prevent reading difficulties is having outstanding reading instruction during the school years. (NEA, 1999) Therefore, early intervention and continued language activities can prevent reading difficulties.

In the state that both Sites A and B are in, it is not a requirement for students to attend preschool or kindergarten before entering first grade. Therefore, many students start school at different levels due to different literacy experiences.

In conclusion, factors that cause low reading abilities are the lack of a balanced literacy approach to teaching reading, students coming from low economic backgrounds, students having English as a second language, and the lack of early intervention.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

LITERATURE REVIEW

Low reading abilities interfere with students' academic achievement. Solutions to the problem include early intervention, implementation of the Four Blocks of Literacy program, parent involvement in students' reading education, to teach phonological awareness, and to teach following a balanced literacy program, which includes both phonics and whole language. (Cunningham, 1998)

One solution to the problem of low reading abilities is early intervention. Richard W. Riley (1998), the U.S. Secretary of Education, stated during the "State of American Education Speech" that research on brain development finds that in the first three years of a child's life, most of their capacity to learn is developed. Furthermore, preschool programs are very beneficial for those children who lack the opportunities to learn at home. Throughout the preschool program, the children have opportunities to say nursery rhymes, listen to and examine books, see and talk about print, and write messages. These experiences help future achievement throughout the school years. (CIERA, 1998) After preschool, meaningful reading and writing activities in kindergarten and first grade continue to promote skills that lead to reading success. The basic skills learned at this early age are essential for a quality education. (Riley, 1998) The Special Education Reading Task Force of California states, "Effective prevention and early intervention programs can increase the reading skills of 85 percent to 90 percent of poor readers to average levels." (1999, p. 1) If students do not receive early intervention in reading, they may experience a lifelong struggle with reading. Children need the

opportunities to develop key language skills, such as phonological awareness, to prevent this struggle from occurring. Direct instruction of other crucial literacy skills, such as letter recognition, oral language, and vocabulary development should be taught as early as preschool. Also, 50 percent of reading difficulties may be prevented if children are provided with effective language development in the preschool and kindergarten years with effective reading instruction continuing in the primary grades. The importance of early literacy intervention is evident with new early literacy standards and the accountability of teachers. Some standards are based on "milestones" that children should achieve at certain ages. For example, the children should understand that the order of the words in a sentence is important. They should also learn skills to decode and encode words. Most researchers come to a consensus that if children master these concepts and skills, they will most likely be children who can read more easily than those who did not learn these skills. Those students who did not learn the skills, most likely develop reading difficulties. (Bodrova, 1999)

Another solution to low reading abilities may be the implementation of a literacy program called, Four Blocks of Literacy. (Cunningham, 1998) Patricia M. Cunningham, Dorothy P. Hall, and Margaret Defee developed the Four Blocks of Literacy program during the 1989 to 1990 school year. (Cunningham, 1998)

The program consists of four components called blocks. These four blocks are Guided Reading, Working with Words, Self-Selected Reading, and Writing. These blocks represent the major methods to teaching reading. (Hall, 2000) Four Blocks of Literacy is a multilevel program, meaning that instruction is not targeted to one reading level. (Cunningham, 1998) This is one positive aspect of the program because in

today's classrooms there are students at many different reading levels. (Hall, 2000) When this literacy program is implemented, all four blocks are taught daily for two-and-a-quarter to two-and-a-half hours a day. Daily instruction of the Four Blocks of Literacy provides many different opportunities for all students to learn how to read and write. (Cunningham, 1998 and Youngblood, 2000)

The Guided Reading Block has three purposes. The first purpose is to expose students to a broad range of children's literature. Another purpose is to teach comprehension. The last purpose is to teach children strategies to read literature that gets more difficult throughout the school year. (Hall, 2000) For each Guided Reading lesson, there is a before reading activity, a during reading activity, and an after reading activity. (Cunningham, 1999)

According to the Four Blocks of Literacy program, there are many different strategies that can be used before reading occurs, in which the teacher introduces and supports text that is easy or is grade-level appropriate. (Cunningham, 1998) One activity includes activating the students' prior knowledge about the topic of the story.

A way to activate their prior knowledge is to use graphic organizers. A web is one example of a graphic organizer that is used to help students organize their prior knowledge on paper before they begin reading. (Cunningham, 1999) For example, if the students are going to read a story about gift-giving, a web could be filled out about gifts. Students list ideas about kinds of gifts, how one feels when they give a gift, how one feels when they receive a gift, and on what occasions gifts are given. This activity puts the students in the mindset of the story and is an opportunity for students to share gift-giving experiences they have had.

Furthermore, the teacher can guide a discussion about the title and pictures from the story, which allows them to make predictions about what the story will be about. They learn and practice making predictions about what may happen in a story or what they will learn. (Cunningham, 1999) This is important because reading is making sense of what the author is telling you. In other words, "Reading is communicating with an author- through predicting and checking." (May, 1994) When a student makes a prediction, they are setting their purpose for reading the book. This enables them to guide their own reading rather than the teacher. Once their predictions are made, their attention is engaged and comprehension is enhanced. (Cunningham, 1999)

Also, a class discussion could occur about the key vocabulary words that they will encounter in the story. Knowing what the vocabulary words mean is necessary for comprehension. (Cunningham, 1999)

These before reading activities not only access their prior knowledge, but also allow the students to make personal connections to the text, which engages the students. This increases their comprehension or understanding of the story during reading.

There are different activities for during reading. Flexible groupings of the students are provided by the teacher in order to read the text. Some of the different group configurations are partner reading, individual reading, teacher reading with small groups, or book club groups. (Cunningham, 1999)

During partner reading, two students read together. This allows friends to help each other read. In assigning partners, the teacher should pair up a student who is struggling with reading with a student who can help. A student can also read

individually. Individual reading of a text is used when the students are capable of reading the text themselves.

Sometimes a teacher will want to meet in a small group of students to read the text, while other students are partner reading or reading individually. The teacher helps the group to provide strategies they have been learning in class. Using the small group lends support to those students who need a lot of support. However, students who are able readers should be included in the group to model good reading strategies.

The last configuration, book clubs, involves students given the choice of three books to read. Theme, author, topic, or genre relates these books to each other. Similar to the teacher led small groups, these groups are not ability-based. These groups meet on a regular basis to read and discuss the books. (Cunningham, 1999)

During any of the group configurations, the students read fictional literature, they also learn the story elements, including characters, setting, and plot, which is what is happening in the story. Learning the story elements is important because it helps the students to organize the information that they read. When the students read informational literature, they learn how to organize and compare the information that they have read. In doing both of these activities, their comprehension is increased. (Cunningham, 1999)

The after reading activities are just as important as the before reading activities to improve students' comprehension. (Cunningham, 2000) Since building comprehension strategies is the major goal of the Guided Reading block, these following activities promote comprehension.

One activity is to follow up any purposes that were set before reading. Going back to the previous example, if the purpose was to see all the different kinds of gifts that were given in the story, the after reading activity could be listing all of the gifts. This checks the students' comprehension of the story.

Another after reading activities could include finishing filling out any graphic organizers that were started before reading. For example, if the students were learning about lions, they could write down what they already know about lions before reading, and then after reading the text, add more facts that they learned.

Also, after reading a story the students could act out the book. When the students act out the story, they think about the important story elements, including characters, setting, and the events and their outcomes. When students regularly act out the stories, the students are thinking about which character from the story they would like to be and how they would act if they were that character. The students' comprehension of the story is greatly increased when they do this type of thinking about the characters. This activity is beneficial to all students including those who are struggle with the English language. Observing and participating in the acting out of stories helps increase vocabulary, reading, and English skills in a comfortable setting. (Cunningham, 1999)

Another activity to increase comprehension is called, "The Beach Ball." In this activity the students pass around a beach ball that has different questions written on it. These questions ask about the title, author, main characters, setting, events, and ending. When this activity is done often, the students develop a greater understanding

of the story elements and their comprehension is increased because while they read, they think about the questions they will answer on the beach ball. (Cunningham, 1999)

The next block is Working with Words. In this block, students learn to read and spell high-frequency words and spelling patterns that allow them to decode and spell many other words. The Four Blocks of Literacy program has a list of high-frequency words for each grade level. (Cunningham, 1998, 1999) High-frequency words are "Words that occur in the speaking and writing of a linguistic culture far more than most words; for practical purposes, the 1,000 most frequently used words in a given language, which provide one with about 75 percent of the language normally used." (May, 1994, p. 576)

High frequency words are common in a child's speaking vocabulary. They are words that children come across in their reading. Furthermore, they are the words that the children will want to use when they write. (May, 1994) When a child is reading and are familiar with these high-frequency words, they will be able to decode the words more quickly. This will lead to an increase in fluency, which will allow the child to comprehend the whole piece of literature quicker. (May, 1994)

In the Working with Words block, the high-frequency words are practiced through word wall activities. These include practicing five high-frequency words a week. The students see the words, say the words, and then write the words on a daily basis. Also, a variety of review activities are done to provide enough practice so that the words can be read and spelled automatically. (Cunningham, 1999)

To begin the word wall practice, the students number their paper from one to five. The teacher displays five words on a chart visible to all students. The teacher calls out

one word at a time, and the students chant the letters to a rhythm, clap out the letters to rhythm, and snap out the letters to a rhythm. Then they write the words on paper and outline the word. The students then do an "On-the- Back" activity on the other side of the paper. Some of the different activities include: putting the words in alphabetical order, adding –ed, -s, and –ing endings to the words, using the words in sentences, using the riming part of the word to make other words (cat, hat, fat), and playing "Mind Reader" which is guessing the word the teacher is thinking of by using the clues the teacher gives. (Cunningham,1999)

The practicing of these words improves their reading abilities and transfers over to their writing. The words are displayed on the word wall where all students can see and use them. (Cunningham, 1999)

The second part of the Working with Words Block is having spelling patterns and phonics activities. "Psychologists tell us that our brains separate unknown words into their own onsets-all the letters up to the vowels-and the rimes-the vowel and letters following it." (Cunningham, 1999, p. 137) In order for students to be good decoders and spellers, children need to acquire the skill of separating words into the onset and rime parts quickly, then associate the correct sounds with the patterns, and lastly recombine the sounds. (Cunningham, 1999)

The Working with Words Block has different activities for the students to practice this decoding process. These are "Making Words, Rounding up the Rhymes, Guess the Covered Word, Using Words You Know, and Reading/Writing Rhymes." (Cunningham, 1999, p. 161-162)

"Making Words" is an engaging, hands-on activity where the students manipulate letters to create words. It teaches children to observe patterns in words and changing one letter can make new words. The children have six to eight letters, which are cut out separately with lower-case letters on one side, and upper-case letters on the other side. The students begin making small words, then longer words, and finally the word that can be made with all of the letters. (Cunningham, 1999)

For example, a lesson would start with the students having the letters d, p, r, s, s, e, and i. A discussion occurs about the different vowel and consonant letters that are being used. Then the teacher directs the students to make the three-letter word, "red." The students would manipulate their letters to make the word. The teacher calls on one student to come up to the front of the room to make the word on a chart with large cutout letters for the class to see. The teacher has the word already written on a card, and displays the word after the student makes it. Next, the teacher could ask the students to change the vowel in "red" to make the word, "rid." The lesson would continue with the teacher directing the students to make four-letter words, five-letter words, and so on until they create the word using all seven letters. (Cunningham, 1999)

The last steps in the "Making Words" lesson are sorting and transferring the letter patterns. In the sorting step, the words are organized by different letter patterns. The patterns might be the beginning letter, the rime part of the word, or different consonant clusters, like "pr" and "sp."

The transfer step involves the students thinking of other words they could add to the chart that follow the same spelling pattern. For example, some of the words they made with the letters are "ride" and "side." In this step, they could add words with

different beginning letters, but have the same spelling pattern of "-ide." They could add words like "hide, abide, and tide." Knowing spelling patterns can help students spell other words. (Cunningham, 1999)

The next activity, "Rounding up the Rhymes," is an activity involving a book that was previously read, that has a lot of rhyming words with the same spelling pattern. As the teacher reviews the books, the students tell the rhyming words, and the teacher writes each one on an index card and displays them on a chart. After all of the words are put up on the chart, the students underline the spelling patterns seen in the rhyming words. Those words that rhyme, but have different spelling patterns, are discarded. For example, in the words "Ned and bed," the "-ed" in the words would be underlined. However, the words "dear and here" would be discarded because they do not have the same spelling pattern. The last, necessary step is the transfer step. The students generate other words to put up on the chart with the same spelling/rhyming patterns. This technique of using words from books and words the students generate improves the chance that students will use familiar rhyming words when they come across a word they don't know. (Cunningham, 1999)

Another activity is "Guess the Covered Word." Its purpose is to practice the strategy of checking the meaning of word with the letter-sound information. The teacher displays five sentences written on sentence strips with one word in each sentence covered with two different colors of sticky-notes. One color covers up the onset, or letters up to the first vowel. The other color covers up the rime, or the rest of the letters. The students read the sentences one at a time and make guesses as to what the covered word is. They need to take into account the length of the covered word and

what word would make sense in the sentence. After some guesses are recorded on the board, the onset is uncovered. Their guesses that don't start with the letter(s) are crossed out. At this time, new guesses can be made based on the beginning letter(s) and the meaning of the sentence. After all guesses are listed, the covered word is revealed. This activity allows the students to use context clues and letter clues to figure out an unknown word. They can use this strategy when they come to an unfamiliar word while reading. (Cunningham, 1999)

The next activity, "Using Words You Know," is an activity which helps children learn to use familiar words to read and spell many other words. To begin the lesson, the teacher chooses three or four words that the children know that have many other words that follow the same spelling pattern. The words are written in three columns on the board and on a piece of paper for each student. The teacher displays one word, and the students have to figure out which of the three words that it rhymes with. Using the rhyming word, they try to decode the word that was given by the teacher. The students then spell and say the column word and spell and say the rhyming word. After this is done a few times, the teacher gives a word verbally, and the students try to figure out how to spell it using the column words. (Cunningham, 1999)

The last activity is "Reading/Writing Rhymes." This activity allows students to practice using spelling patterns to spell and decode hundreds of words. The teacher hands out different cards that have consonants (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, y, and z), digraphs which are two letters that make one sound (sh, ch, wh, and th), other two-letter digraphs that make one sound (ph, wr, kn, and qu), and blends where the beginning letters are blended together (bl, br, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gl, gr, pl, pr, sc, scr, sk, sl,

sm, sn, sp, spr, st, str, sw, and tr.) Next, the teacher writes a spelling pattern, like –ack, on chart paper eight times. The students help the teacher spell and say the pattern each time it is written. The teacher has children bring up cards that they will make a word with the spelling pattern. If their card does make a word with the pattern, the teacher writes the word on the chart and uses the word in a sentence. Words suggested by the students that do rhyme, but have a different spelling are written on the bottom of the chart. If the students do not think of all of the words, the teacher suggests one of the cards to be added to make a word. Then the teachers and students create silly sentences using many of the rhyming words. In small groups or with a partner, the students can then work together to write their own rhymes to share with the class. (Cunningham, 1999)

In all of these activities, students work directly with words to improve their phonemic awareness, which then improves their reading. (May, 1994)

The third block of the Four Blocks of Literacy program is the Self-Selected Reading Block. (Cunningham, 1998) The block begins usually with the teacher reading aloud a large variety of genres of literature. "Reading aloud to children is the single most important activity for creating the motivation and background knowledge essential for success in reading." (Cunningham, 1999, p. 22)

The following are the benefits of the teacher reading aloud to students: motivates children to become lifelong readers, increases background knowledge on a variety of topics, develops auditory and verbal vocabularies, teaches story elements and structure, inspires the students to create stories of their own, and provides experiences for children who lack firsthand experiences. (Cunningham, 1999)

During read aloud time, the students generate questions, which is more of a natural way of learning. Reading aloud makes for a relaxed environment, which allows for better learning. Also, the students develop new meanings, learn from mistakes without worry, become engaged, and connect old knowledge with new. (May, 1994)

The read aloud section is followed by the children reading a variety of books that are at their own reading level. At silent reading time, the teacher conferences with individual students to assess their reading abilities. During the conference time, the student's thinking is developed. (May, 1994) Also, they have the opportunity to work one-on-one with the teacher. (Cunningham, 1999)

The students need a long uninterrupted period of time to choose books, time to read, time to think, time to converse with other students, and time to express their enthusiasm about the books they have read. (May, 1994) During silent reading, students have the chance to see themselves as readers and improve their fluency. (Youngblood, 2000) Furthermore, students who do participate in an extended silent reading program perform better on achievement tests. (May, 1994)

The last block is the Writing Block. This block consists of the teacher modeling things writers do and time for the students to create their own writing pieces. (Hall, 2000) Some ideas for modeling writing are synonyms, staying on topic, capital letters, and punctuation marks. (Cunningham, 1999)

Students think about and use their knowledge of phonics learned in the other blocks to write stories. They learn about the writing process (brainstorming, first draft, revising, editing, and final copy, grammar, and the mechanics about good writing.

(Cunningham,1999 and Youngblood, 2000) The writing time ends with some students sharing their work.

The writing block is important because children's reading comprehension and critical-thinking abilities can be positively affected by writing. Furthermore, studies have shown that children who participate in a writing program have higher scores on reading tests. Also, teaching reading through writing improves students' motivation to read. (May, 1994)

In addition to early intervention and implementing the Four Blocks of Literacy program, another solution is increasing parent involvement in students' reading education. (Cunningham, 1998) "Every mother and father, every grandparent and caring adult needs to know that they can have an enormous influence in shaping a young child's future." (Riley, 1998) Simple activities such as, singing to an infant, reading to them, and cooing with them helps to activate their brain. Research shows that if a nurturing environment is not provided by the parents there are consequences for the child. In first grade, there can be one school year difference in the levels of achievement between the children who are beginning school. (Riley, 1998)

One research-based principle is that home language and literacy experiences promote the development of important print concepts. If a child has had these experiences, they enter school ready to read. When students read with their family members, they develop a broad range of information that helps them with their reading at school. Once a student enters school, parents should model good reading habits and should watch over homework activities and the amount of television watched. If parents

participate with their children in these ways, the students' achievement will improve. (CIERA, 1998)

In addition to these literacy experiences at home, the home environment should also have satisfactory health care and loving and warm care from parents. Also, parents should encourage oral language skills and interest in reading at home and in preschool. (NEA, 1999)

When adults read to their child, the child may begin to read along with the adult by mumbling, repeating phrases, and finishing sentences and phrases when the adult reader pauses in the reading. When read aloud to, the child's knowledge of the language of a book, understanding story structure, and taking meaning from the text increases. (Elster, 1994) Reading aloud to children also increases the child's positive attitudes toward reading and reading success. (Brock, 1994)

The home environment has a direct effect on the development of early literacy, which includes reading and writing materials that are made available, modeling good literacy behaviors by, not only parents, but also brothers and sisters, and verbal conversations between both children and adults. (Brock, 1994)

In one study, 18 parents were observed reading with their child. These parents were from three different socio-economic statuses, including low-SES urban black, low-SES Appalachian white, and middle-SES mainstream white. (May, 1994) When these parents were observed reading to their child, parents consistently did the following things: related events in the story to their child's life, expanded the child's background knowledge, helped the child to use the pictures to understand the story, helped the child

to use the text to understand the story, and encouraged the child to act like a reader. (May, 1994)

By doing these things, the parents helped their child to concentrate on what the author was trying to convey. They also encouraged their child to use their own background knowledge to understand the story. They also helped to make the story more interesting. They also guided their child to read with a purpose of understanding what the author was saying. (May, 1994)

Other studies have also shown that parents who are involved in the education of their child a direct effect on their reading achievement is seen. For example, 150 students in third, fourth, and fifth grade who were at least two years behind in their reading, were put in a tutoring program with parents. The parents were trained and then worked with the students in a home setting to read books, work on homework, practice various word lists, and played different reading games. In the experimental group, the students finished the year with an average grade or equivalency score of 3.8. The students who were part of the control group and did not participate in the tutoring program had a score of 2.8. (May, 1994)

Other ways to get parents involved to improve reading level are: create a "Parent Read-Aloud Collection" at the school library, train volunteers as aides to help children with various writing activities, provide a center for language and reading games for parents to play with students, provide parent brochures with different tips to help their child read, and plan workshops with different reading purposes. (May, 1994)

Therefore, schools are effective if they promote contact and communication with parents to involve them in their students' education. (Allington, 1996) Parents play an

important role in creating a child's early literacy development. (Brock, 1994) "By and large, when children grow up in print-rich homes, where parents model reading and writing, where literacy is a tool of day-to-day family life, where stories and words are treasured, where reading aloud is a bedtime ritual, good readers usually emerge." (Zemelman,1993, p. 31)

The next solution to improve students' reading abilities is to teach phonological awareness, which includes phonics and phonemic awareness in the reading curriculum. Phonological awareness is the ability to attend to and manipulate language sounds and to change print into vocal sounds. (May, 1994 and Smith, 1995) Phonics follows the philosophy of teaching reading that stresses how spelling is related to the different speech sounds in ways that are systematic. (Montgomery, 2000) Phonemic Awareness is to understand that words are made up of parts that have sounds that are smaller than a syllable, which is also called a phoneme. In addition, it is the knowledge that phonemes have specific features. (Montgomery, 2000)

Learning to read is not a natural occurrence in human life. The act of reading is complex. It involves performing different actions at the same time, including the eyes, the brain, and the psychology of the mind. (Fitzsimmons, 1998) Learning to read successfully requires systematic specific instruction. Instruction should include teachers modeling different sounds, with the students repeating them. Also, teaching phonological awareness should begin with easy words and then gradually move to ones that are more difficult. Teachers should support and assist beginning readers, as the sounds become more complex. Teachers should develop a schedule and sequence

that will meet the needs of each child to learn and develop the sounds. (Fitzsimmons, 1998)

There are three levels to phonological awareness. They are word level, syllable level, and phoneme level. In a lesson involving a story, word level strategies that can be taught include counting the words and identifying missing words. Syllable counting and deleting are example of syllable level strategies. This would include counting syllables in different words and saying words without their endings. One strategy taught at the phoneme level could be breaking words into onsets and rimes. For example, "pray" would be broken into "pr" and "ay." Another strategy could be focusing on final sounds. For instance, the teacher could ask if "much" ends with /ch/ or /k/. (Montgomery, 2000)

Phonological awareness causes and is a consequence of successful reading. Successful readers enter first grade with sufficient skills in phonological awareness. This skill is a better predictor of successful reading than other measures such as mental age, cognitive level, and proficiency of language. Students' decoding skills in the first and second grades can be a strong predictor of how well they'll comprehend in ninth grade. Poor readers tend to have weak phonological awareness abilities. However, instruction and practice can improve their reading success. Once a child learns how to read, phonological awareness activities become easier. (Montgomery, 2000)

Printed letters need to be changed into sounds. Beginning readers should come to school with an awareness of the sound configurations of words and be able to manipulate and change the sounds in words. Those students who come prepared with

this knowledge of phonemic awareness are more successful at reading than those who do not have these skills. (Fitzsimmons, 1998)

The last solution to improve students' abilities in reading is to follow a balanced literacy program, which focuses on using multiple methods to teach reading and writing. A balanced literacy program involves balancing phonics instruction with reading and writing activities that are holistic and integrated. The teacher is aware that she/he needs to vary the lessons to prevent boredom of repetitive drills and activities. (Zemelman, 1993)

For many years, people believed in the proposals that only recommended one way to teach reading to improve literacy. However, these were simplified solutions for an immense problem. (Flippo, 1999) For example, the debate over the whole language teaching philosophy, which is an authentic, holistic learning environment, versus the phonics teaching philosophy, which is a structured learning environment focusing on spelling and its speech sounds, has gone on for years. (May, 1994) During an interview, Catherine Snow, a professor at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, was asked if the whole language and phonics debate was over. She reiterated what research has shown which is that educators are using the necessary teaching methods and tailoring their instruction to meet the needs of the students. (NEA, 1999) In other words, there is no one method or a combination of different methods that can correctly teach all students to read. It is essential that teachers know different methods for teaching reading to children. They need to have a strong understanding of their students' needs to know which methods to use. (International Reading Association, 1999)

Primary level reading instruction needs to be consistent, designed well, and focused. There are lessons in which students receive phonics instruction, which includes methodical instruction on word recognition and the common letter-sound relationships. Furthermore, the students practice reading words that are frequent in literature, such as "the" and "what." Teachers must also observe their students reading to make sure that they are not only reading accurately, but also understanding the text they are reading. Some strategies to ensure comprehension are predicting, making inferences, summarizing text, and self-questioning to make sure the text makes sense. Some activities teachers can do with the class, which will improve word recognition and comprehension are reading a text many times, teacher guided reading and writing activities, lessons to teach reading strategies, teacher read alouds with student feedback, and discussions of texts that have been read. (CIERA, 1998)

In order to do these balanced literacy activities, the environment must be conducive to student learning. The students should have opportunities to apply the knowledge acquired from instruction to daily reading and writing activities. The teacher needs to read aloud daily with discussions following afterwards. Students have independent reading time each day, along with time to write stories and keep personal journals. The teacher needs to monitor these activities making sure that the students are using their time wisely and allow time for giving feedback on their effort and work. Teachers assess these activities to see the students' strengths and weaknesses, so future lessons for improvement can be planned. (CIERA, 1998)

After the primary grades, in third grade and above, proficient reading is maintained and improved with teaching that has these basic and crucial traits: students

have many chances to read a variety of texts, students acquire new knowledge and vocabulary through reading and direct instruction, students read different kinds of texts like essays and stories and are cognizant of the way the writers organize these different types of texts, and helping students understand and be able to reason with the text. (CIERA, 1998)

Research has shown that there is not a method to teach reading that is better than another in all situations and environments. In a given study when different methods were used, some students were reading very well, while other students had immense difficulties. (International Reading Association, 1999) This is illustrated in a study, which involved 11 experts whose philosophies on reading varied greatly. After ten years of discussions about different methods and practices to foster reading development, many commonalties were reached. One agreement is to have classroom instruction that is flexible. Also, there are no "absolutes" in teaching reading, for instance, teachers should not teach to one genre of text. Furthermore, teachers should take into account what interests and motivates the children, along with considering how the students see themselves and what they can accomplish. Teachers should allot a great deal of time to read, write, and discuss their reading and writing. Also, reading and language arts should be integrated. Teachers should incorporate the learning of phonics skills in their lessons, but not done by themselves. Lastly, the teachers should provide literacy experiences that have meaning and purpose and that are rewarding to the student. (Flippo, 1999)

We have come to the realization that different children learn in different ways, and the process of learning how to read and reading itself are more difficult than once

believed. This complex skill involves the following: having and sustaining the self-motivation to read, possessing appropriate strategies to get meaning from the text, having prior knowledge and a wide vocabulary to understand the text, being able to read fluently, having the skills to decode words that are not familiar, and knowing that phonemes have a connection to the printed material. (International Reading Association, 1999)

An adept teacher of reading in grades pre-kindergarten through second grade understands what the skill of reading entails, uses this to assess individual students, and then balances the teaching methods used so all children can learn to read. (International Reading Association, 1999) In order for the teacher to successfully teach reading, the school districts need to help develop reading programs that meet the learning styles of all children. The school districts should have guidelines created that make sure all children have enough time to read. Furthermore, there needs to be professional development activities to enable teachers to provide balanced literacy instruction. (International Reading Association, 1999)

In conclusion, a balanced literacy program is defined as "Balance does not mean that all skills and standards receive equal emphasis at a given point in time. Rather, it implies that the overall emphasis accorded to a skill or standard is determined by its priority or importance relative to students' language and literacy needs." (Special Education Reading Task Force, California Department of Education, & California State Board of Education, 1999)

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of the implementation of the "Working with Words" block from the Four Blocks of Literacy program, during the period of October 2000 to February 2001, the second and third graders will improve their word analysis skills, as measured by word lists and running records. (Cunningham, 1998)

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Teach five high frequency words a week from the "Working with Words" block from the Four Blocks of Literacy program.
2. Teach two "Making Words" lessons from the "Working with Words" block from the Four Blocks of Literacy program each week.
3. Create the materials to implement the "Working with Words" block from the Four Blocks of Literacy program. (Cunningham, 1998)

Project Action Plan

During the weeks from October 2000 to February 2001 Working with Words lessons will be taught on a daily basis for between fifteen minutes and thirty minutes. Working with Words is a block from the Four Blocks of Literacy program. (Cunningham, 1998) Each day, the five high-frequency words of the week will be practiced, and two days a week, the students will be participating in a making words lesson. The lessons will be taught by the teacher during regular reading instruction. The assessments that will be used include Qualitative Reading Inventory-II Word List and Qualitative Reading Inventory-II Running Record. A pretest of all of the assessments will be given during

the first month of school. A posttest of all of the assessments will be given during the first week of February 2001.

The purpose of this program is to ensure that children read, spell, and use high-frequency words correctly, and that they learn the patterns necessary for decoding and spelling. This program is multisensory which means the learners will learn in an auditory, visual, kinesthetically, and tactile way. The learning must be multisensory because all learners retain information in different ways. Mutisensory teaching reaches all types of learners.

Some of these mutisensory techniques when practicing the high frequency words are clapping, snapping, stomping, and other body movements to spell words. They also write down the words, which is also a kinesthetic activity. As the students are spelling the words kinesthetically, they are also spelling them out loud to a rhythm, which is an auditory strategy.

To teach the lessons the teacher chooses five high frequency words to work on for the week. These words are chosen from a grade level list of high frequency words. On a daily basis the students:

1. see and say the words.
2. chant the words.
3. write the words and check them together.
4. trace around the words and check them together with the teacher.
5. do *On-the-Back* activities involving the words.

On-the-Back activities include: putting the words in alphabetical order, writing the words in sentences, and guessing the word the teacher is describing with clues.

Also, two days a week the students participate in a making words activity. This activity is to help the students learn spelling patterns. Some of the multisensory techniques are as the students are trying to create words with letters, they manipulate the letters on their desks. This is a kinesthetic and tactile activity. Furthermore, visually, they see the created words, and they say the words out loud, which is an auditory activity.

In order to teach the lessons, the teacher needs to follow the Making Words guide. The guide includes the letters needed for each lesson, the words to be created, and the teacher prompts to guide the lesson. The teacher needs to have a set of large letters to model the words, and the students need a set of little letters to make words at their desks. During the two days these lessons are taught, the students:

1. manipulate letters of the alphabet to construct words.
2. sort words into patterns.
3. use assorted rhyming words to spell and read new words.

On the two days that making words is done in class, the students take home their making words homework, which allows the students to create the words again at home.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of implementing Working with Words, a posttest will be given. The posttest will consist of reading inventory running records and reading inventory word lists. (Caldwell, 1995)

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve the students' word analysis skills. The implementation of the block "Working with Words" from the Four Blocks of Literacy program was selected to affect the desired changes. (Cunningham, 1998) A parent consent form was sent home to receive permission for their child to participate in the study. (Appendix B)

"Working with Words" was used to teach word analysis skills during reading instruction for thirty minutes four days a week. "Working with Words" included teaching five high frequency words and two "Making Words" lessons every week from the Four Blocks of Literacy program. (Cunningham, 1998)

When teaching the five high frequency words, the lesson was multisensory. Each day, the students would chant and write the words to become familiar with them and memorize the spellings of the words. Through this process, the desired outcomes were that the students would recognize the spelling patterns to help them spell other similar words and to increase recognition of the words in other reading passages. After the words were written, the words were outlined by each student to help them recognize the shapes of the words. Recognizing the shapes of letters helps the students learn to spell the words. Everyday, an "On-the-Back" activity was done. On Mondays, the

students put the five high frequency words in alphabetical order. On Tuesdays, an activity called "Mind Reader" was done. The students had to guess which of the five words was being described by the teacher using the clues the teacher was giving. On Wednesdays, the students wrote sentences with the five high frequency words. On Thursdays, the students added endings to the word, such as –ed and –ing. If adding endings wasn't applicable to the words, students thought of other words that rhymed with the five words. See Appendix C for the practiced high frequency words.

The "Making Words" lessons included trying to create words from a group of letters. This lesson also promotes the recognition of spelling patterns in the words made and in other words they encounter in reading. "Making Words" was done on Mondays and Wednesdays. One example lesson was using the letters: a, e, e, b, c, h, s. The students begin by making small words such as "be, he, and see," and gradually create bigger words. The students would eventually create the final word that uses all of the letters, which in this case is "beaches." The lesson continued with a sorting activity in which the students sorted the words by spelling patterns. Lastly, the students tried to spell more difficult words in the transfer activity. For example, the students were asked to spell "reach" or "preach," which matched the spelling pattern in "beach." See Appendix D for the other "Making Words" lessons that were completed.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of the implementation of "Working with Words" to increase word analysis skills a posttest of the Qualitative Reading Inventory-II Running Record and Qualitative Reading Inventory-II Word List were given. Table 7 shows the results of the posttest of the Qualitative Reading Inventory-II Running Record:

Table 7 Second Grade Students' Posttest Results from Qualitative Reading Inventory II-Running Record

Performance Level	Independent Level		Instructional Level		Frustration Level	
Text Level	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
Criteria Not Met	2		4			3
Pre-Primer	3				2	
Primer		1	2			
One		2	1	1	2	
Two		1		1	1	1
Three	2	2		2		1
Four		1			2	2
Five				3		

When looking at Table 7, the text level proceeds in different levels from criteria not met to level five. On the pretest in the area of independent level, two second graders didn't have an independent reading level, and three students had an independent reading level that was at the pre-primer reading level, which is below grade level. Also, two students were reading independently at the third grade level, which is above grade level. The majority of the second graders were below grade level in reading at the independent level.

On the posttest, improvement was seen on all levels. After the posttest, all seven students had an independent reading level, compared to only five on the pretest. Furthermore on the posttest, four students were reading at grade level or above, while the pretest only had two students reading at grade level or above.

On the pretest in the area of instructional level, all seven second graders had an instructional level, but all were below grade level. After the posttest was given, six out of the seven students had an instructional reading level at or above grade level. Only one student was below grade level.

On the pretest in the area of frustration level, four out of the seven second graders had a frustration level below grade level. Three students had a frustration level at or above grade level. The posttest showed a wider spread of reading levels. Three students didn't have a frustration level, which is positive. This means they were able to read all the levels of text without any frustration. The remaining four students were frustrated at or above grade level text.

The second graders showed an improvement since the pretest. Students have shown improvement in all three levels. At all levels, most students are reading at grade level or above.

Table 8 Third Grade Students' Posttest Results from Qualitative Reading Inventory II-Running Record

Performance Level	Independent Level		Instructional Level		Frustration Level	
Text Level	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
Criteria Not Met				1		3
Pre-Primer						
Primer						
One						
Two	3					
Three	4	4	3			
Four		2	4	4	3	
Five		1		2	4	4

When looking at Table 8, the text level proceeds in different levels from criteria not met to level five. On the pretest in the area of independent level, three third graders had an independent reading level below grade level. Four students had an independent

reading level at grade level. On the posttest, improvement was seen on all levels. After the posttest, all seven students had an independent reading level at or above grade level.

On the pretest in the area of instructional level, all seven third graders had an instructional level that was at or above grade level. After the posttest was given, six out of the seven students had an instructional reading level above grade level. Only one student did not have an instructional level because the student read independently at all tested levels.

On the pretest in the area of frustration level, all of the seven third graders had a frustration level above grade level. This is where third graders should fall because their reading level should be at the third grade level, and anything above that would be more difficult for them. The posttest showed a wider spread of reading levels. Three students didn't have a frustration level, which is positive. This means they were able to read all the levels of text without any frustration. The remaining four students were frustrated above grade level text.

The third graders showed an improvement since the pretest. Students have shown improvement in all three levels. At every level, all of the students are reading at grade level or above.

Table 9 Second Grade Students' Posttest Results from Qualitative Reading Inventory II-Word List

Performance Level / Text Level	Independent Level		Instructional Level		Frustration Level	
Text Level	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
Criteria Not Met	2		2	2		
Pre-Primer	1	1				
Primer	2		2		1	
One	2	3	1	1	2	
Two		1	2	1	2	2
Three		2			2	2
Four				3		
Five						3

Table 9 shows the results of the second grader's reading inventory word list. At the time of the pretest, there were no children who performed independently at the second grade level. Five of the students had an independent reading level below grade level. However, two students couldn't read independently at any of the levels.

On the pretest in the area of instructional level, only two second graders had an instructional level at the second grade reading level. On the posttest, four out of the seven students had an instructional reading level at or above grade level.

On the pretest, three students were frustrated below grade level, and four students were frustrated at or above grade level. On the posttest, all seven students had a frustration level at or above grade level.

The second graders showed an improvement since the pretest. Students have shown improvement in all three levels. Although, the students didn't reach grade level in all areas, an improvement was made at every level.

Table 10 Third Grade Students' Posttest Results from Qualitative Reading Inventory II-Word List

Performance Level	Independent Level		Instructional Level		Frustration Level	
Text Level	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
Criteria Not Met				2		2
Pre-Primer						
Primer	2					
One	4		1			
Two	1	1	6		1	
Three		4			6	
Four		1		4		1
Five		1		1		4

The data in Table 10 shows the results of the third grader's reading inventory word list. At the time of the pretest, there were no children who performed independently at the third grade level. On the posttest, six of the seven students performed at or above grade level, while just one student performed one level below grade level.

On the pretest, all of the third graders were reading instructionally below grade level. The students improved on the posttest. Five students performed above grade with text that was at their instructional level.

On the pretest, one student had a frustration level below grade level, and the rest of the students had a frustration level that was at grade level. On the posttest, five students had a frustration level above grade level. Also, two students didn't have a frustration level at any of the text levels. This means they were able to read all of the text levels without frustration.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on reading levels of word lists and running records, the students showed a marked improvement in word analysis skills. The word analysis skills taught during "Working with Words" lessons appear to have transferred to the students' word analysis skills. The number of students reading independently at or above grade level increased in for both the second and third graders on both assessments. Observations of these whole class activities led the teacher/researcher to conclude that students were transferring word analysis skills learned during "Working with Words" lessons to other areas of learning.

These positive results show the success of implementing the "Working with Words" block of the Four Blocks of Literacy program. (Cunningham, 1998) It is recommended that if this program is implemented, the "Working with Words" block should be taught consistently on a daily basis. Before a teacher implements this program, he/she should read about or be trained in the program to learn the different types of activities and steps involved in teaching the block. Furthermore, for the "Making Words" activity to be successful, advanced preparation of materials is necessary. The teacher needs to be motivated and innovative in the presentations of the lessons because the lessons can become repetitive for the students. We would also recommend that the teacher include the other three blocks of the Four Blocks of Literacy because all four blocks are meant to be taught together to ensure student success. If students are struggling with word analysis skills, the "Working with Words" block is a good solution to increase these skills, including seeing spelling patterns in unknown words and becoming familiar with high frequency words.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Teacher Survey on Reading Instruction

Hi everyone! I am giving this survey for my Master's project. Please answer these questions for a project on reading instruction. Please answer these questions based on *last year's* reading instruction. When you're done, please put it in teacher's mailbox by September 19th. Your input is greatly appreciated!

1. What philosophy did your reading lessons focus on?

- ☐ Phonics
- ☐ Whole Language
- ☐ Both Phonics and Whole Language

2. How often did you directly teach phonics skills (decoding and word analysis) in your classroom?

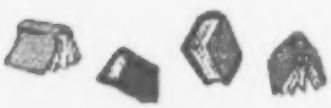
- ☐ 0 days/week
- ☐ 1-2 days/week
- ☐ 2-4 days/week
- ☐ 5 days/week

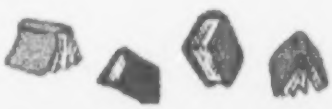
3. How often did your students read out loud in class?

- ☐ 0 times/week
- ☐ 1-2 times/week
- ☐ 3-4 times/week
- ☐ 5+ times/week

4. Did your students work on reading fluently (expression, pronunciation, following punctuation marks, and volume) during reading instruction?

- ☐ 0 times/week
- ☐ 1-2 times/week
- ☐ 3-4 times/week
- ☐ 5+ times/week





Appendix B
Parent Consent Form

Dear Parent or Guardian, September 15, 2000

This year in addition to the reading curriculum, I will be implementing a new program called "Making Words" from the Four Blocks of Literacy. This program focuses on word analysis, which is being able to sound out new words.

I wanted to make you aware that the program fits well with the reading curriculum that is already in use. During reading instruction, "Making Words" will be taught for an average of thirty minutes a day.

Some students have a difficult time and become frustrated with reading because it is hard for them to sound out unfamiliar, individual words. This program teaches children different letter(s) sounds and models how to look for letter patterns in words. For example, l**unch**, b**unch**, and p**unch** all have the "**unch**" pattern.

Also, this program encourages the children to use their whole body to learn. The children get to clap and cheer letters and manipulate letters that are on cards to create new words.

Assessments will be given at certain points to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The results of the assessments are strictly confidential. The results of our findings will only be reported for groups of students, such as "80% of the students who were taught lessons from 'Making Words' read fluently at their grade level." The results will be used for my graduate level Masters project from St. Xavier University.

Please fill out the following page to give permission to use the results of the reading assessments for research and return **by Tuesday, September 19th.** If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at school. Thanks for your support!

Sincerely,
Teacher's name

Appendix C
Practiced High Frequency Words

Second Grade

Week 1 there, they're, their, when, went
Week 2 where, who, will, one, won
Week 3 was, went, were, why, I
Week 4 about, again, black, car, eating
Week 5 favorite, every, beautiful, best, little
Week 6 can't, didn't, don't, that's, it's
Week 7 to, too, two, right, write
Week 8 boy, girl, friends, brothers, sister
Week 9 bug, float, found, make, made
Week 10 eating, skate, writing, kicked, jump
Week 11 after, are, people, quit, line
Week 12 joke, junk, new, gym, knew
Week 13 think, thank, tell, crash, clock
Week 14 than, them, then, nice, name
Week 15 or, other, our, off, outside
Week 16 have, here, how, into, because

Third Grade

Week 1 there, they're, their, when, went
Week 2 where, who, will, one, won
Week 3 hopeless, laughed, getting, exciting, countries
Week 4 review week three words
Week 5 what, new, knew, no, know
Week 6 didn't, don't, doesn't, can't, won't
Week 7 to, too, two, right, write
Week 8 let's, it's, that, I'm, we're
Week 9 everybody, everything, anyone, sometimes, someone
Week 10 write, right, our, are, wouldn't
Week 11 one, won, by, buy, winner
Week 12 your, you're, also, whole, hole
Week 13 usually, especially, really, then, about
Week 14 where, wear, threw, through, with
Week 15 almost, always, thought, trouble, terrible
Week 16 first, enough, before, myself, its

(Cunningham, 1999)

Appendix D
Making Words Lessons
Second and Third Grade

Week 1	a, c, c, h, r, s, t	scratch
Week 1	a, h, l, p, s, s,	splash
Week 2	e, d, n, p, s, s,	spends
Week 2	e, g, h, n, r, s, t, t	strength
Week 3	i, g, n, p, r, s	spring
Week 3	i, c, k, r, s, t,	tricks
Week 4	o, p, r, s, s, t	sports
Week 4	o, g, n, r, s, t	strong
Week 5	u, b, h, m, c, s, t	thumbs
Week 5	u, k, n, r, s, t	trunks
Week 6	a, i, i, o, d, d, n, t	addition
Week 6	a, a, l, s, w, y	always
Week 7	a, a, e, i, l, m	Amelia
Week 7	a, a, i, l, m, n, s	animals
Week 8	a, e, e, h, n, r, w, y	anywhere
Week 8	a, e, l, p, p, s	apples
Week 9	a, e, e, l, p, s	asleep
Week 9	a, o, o, b, l, l, n, s	balloons
Week 10	a, a, e, b, b, l, l, s	baseball
Week 10	a, e, b, k, s, s, t	baskets
Week 11	a, u, b, b, h, s, t, t	bathtubs
Week 11	a, e, e, b, c, s, h	beaches
Week 12	i, e, b, g, g, s, t	biggest
Week 12	a, e, b, k, l, n, t	blanket
Week 13	a, e, i, b, g, k, n, r	breaking
Week 13	e, i, b, d, g, r, s	bridges
Week 14	a, a, e, c, m, r	camera
Week 14	a, e, c, d, l, n, s	candles
Week 15	a, e, e, c, s, s, t, t	cassette
Week 15	a, e, c, l, s, s, t	castles
Week 16	a, e, e, c, l, r, s	cereals
Week 16	a, i, c, h, r, s	chairs

(Cunningham, 1994)